

April 5, 1984

LB 416A, 561

Mr. President.

SPEAKER NICHOL: LB 416A passes. LB 561.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, I have a motion on the desk. Senator Vard Johnson would move to return LB 561 to Select File for a specific amendment, that is, strike the enacting clause.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, LB 561 is the bill that would expand the powers of an optometrist to the extent that an optometrist was allowed to treat any condition of the human eye or the human lid. I happen to think LB 561 is a pernicious and dangerous bill that has had a charmed life in this Legislature because it has been lobbied so effectively and so well by a group of men and women who fit glasses, but I think this is a dangerous bill and I feel it my duty and responsibility to do what I can to bring this bill back to Select File and to strike the enacting clause. I think I said on this floor once before in talking eyes that I have had a long experience with eye doctors in fitting lenses and eye doctors in just plain fitting lenses spend considerable time examining one's eyes to detect those kinds of abnormalities that can develop very quickly and need to be treated quickly so that one does not find his vision impaired or lose his vision entirely. And eye doctors by their training, which is extraordinarily long because they have college training, they have medical school training, and they finally have training specifically in the eyes, are the kinds of people by virtue of their training that we should as a society essentially entrust our vision to, not to correct acuity, not to prescribe the glasses, but to check for the glaucomas and the tumors and the other kinds of problems that can result in the human eye. Loss of sight is too grievous, is too grievous to put in the hands of people who are trained to fit glasses. LB 561 would confer upon an optometrist, a man or a woman who has been trained to fit glasses, the ability to treat and diagnose eye diseases. Now if the eye disease happens to be an inflammation of the eye, then the